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THE CHICAGO TEACHER.

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EDITORIAL.

THE educational journals, and many teachers throughout the Union, are literally standing on their heads and kicking their heels skyward, because, when the will of Agassiz was opened, it was found therein that he had written himself down—"I, Louis Agassiz, Teacher." In the name of all fools, what should he have called himself? *Bug-hunter, Fly-catcher, Toad-preserved?* Is the name or occupation of teacher so degrading that we must lose what little sense we have when a great and good man, with some show of propriety, calls himself a teacher? Far from being an act of humility on his part, it was almost an assumption—one which we can forgive, but over which we need not go crazy. In taking that title to himself, he placed himself under an obligation to our profession. We overlook his posthumous conceit, on account of his good life and great work. Suppose he had written Louis Agassiz, Professor, or Louis Agassiz, Lecturer, or Louis Agassiz, Philosopher, or Louis Agassiz, Naturalist, or Louis Agassiz, Scientist, what a ridiculous figure Louis Agassiz, deceased, would cut! But, in "Louis Agassiz, Teacher," we have good taste and a dignity that borders on the sublime—dignity which TEACHER gives to Louis Agassiz—dignity which the word received years ago from the names of Plato, Socrates, Hypatia! This ridiculous enthusiasm of teachers, over the will of Agassiz, shows a weakness in our ranks that is pitiable and disgraceful. As in all newly-settled countries, in the United States, there is an undue regard for material resources, muscle and money, and a corresponding contempt of power purely spiritual or intellectual. Here, the teacher is not yet at par in public estimation. He is above par in Europe; hence the expression of Agassiz, in his last will and testament. What will bring us up in public esteem? Professional self-confidence; not raving and ranting and idiotic self-gratulation, because a well-known man calls himself a teacher.

THERE are four essential elements in the character of a good teacher. Firmness and good nature, for discipline; and intelligence and industry, for the promotion of scholarship in the pupils. Lacking any of these elements, the teacher must fail.

PLACING mis-spelled words before children to be written correctly is unfair as a test in examination. It is silly, as humor; and vicious, as a means of instruction. Yet many examiners resort constantly to this method of testing a child's knowledge of spelling; though those men ought to know that the appearance of a mis-spelled word confuses the very best speller. When we see any such examination in print, we are glad that Artemas Ward is dead, and we wish that Josh Billings were ditto.

An Irish schoolmaster was once examined in this city, in the manner of which we are treating. We asked him at the close of the examination, how he had acquitted himself. He replied: "Very well, indeed, until they gave me a page of Greek words printed in Roman characters. If it was Latin, I could translate it; but the devil a thing at all, at all, I know about Greek."

THE method of electing and discharging teachers in this city is, we think, open to criticism. It partakes of the nature of the secret society rather than the fair, open and business-like dealing that should characterize all the operations in which our public schools are concerned. The theory is, that all teachers are dismissed at the end of the year, unless re-employed. Surely it would be more creditable to all concerned to consider teachers employed, unless they are for good reason dismissed, or they choose to resign. It is belittling to teachers to be published every year in the newspapers, and, under the present rule, it is disgrace and professional death to them not to be so published. Why should teachers, any more than clergymen or mechanics, be elected annually? Teaching is not an office, in the political sense of the word. This method of annually deciding the pedagogical life or death of teachers, is a relic of the boarding round period of educational progress in this country, and it should be discarded for the honor of our city and the comfort and dignity of the teachers. The Board of Education have to remain in session till 12 or 1 o'clock one night every summer, electing teachers; whereas, except in rare instances, the whole labor is a matter of form. Why not adopt the motto—"Once a teacher, forever a teacher," unless death, marriage, resignation or dismissal intervene? It is unkind to publish an unmarried woman as elected to a place in school, year after year and year after year. It is still more unkind to publish her dismissal to the world, by omitting her name from the list of teachers elected. And then the cruelty of an accidental omission of a name! It is a fact that more pain has been caused by such "inadvertencies" during the past ten years, than by all the deaths that have taken place among the teachers and their friends during the same period. As to incompetents, the Board has the right at any time to dismiss them; and the abolition of the annual election would lead to the dismissal of

such, under charges properly preferred ; and all would be fair, open and business-like. Who but school-boards find it necessary to publish the discharge of their employes in an official manner ? Even railroad corporations are more considerate. A teacher is discharged, and "hired over," annually ; and lo ! a policeman holds his place during good behavior ! Do teachers need a check and an incentive to correct deportment not needed by policemen ? Are the club and revolver an index of higher virtue than the pen and crayon ? We have banished the rod from our schools ; as a reward of this achievement, we request the Board to do away with the annual election, or at least with the publication of the results of the same.

MUCH has been written and said about the necessity of using tact, both in controlling and instructing children. Now, we all know that a certain amount of tact is not only desirable, but almost indispensable in a well-ordered school-room ; and fortunate, indeed, is she who possesses a large amount of it. But many who teach are so deficient in this, that the necessity for a substitute is obvious. To such we would say : Persistence is the next best thing, and has the advantage over tact, that it is available to all. It is surprising to see what results can be obtained by mere watchful persistence. First in controlling pupils, as nothing can be done that amounts to anything, when a room is in a disorderly condition. Many fail, or partially so, by attempting to eradicate too many evils at once. Better begin with one or two faults, and thoroughly conquer them, than to partly suppress twenty. Take, for instance, gum chewing (which seems to assume an epidemic form at stated intervals), and if you watch so carefully that you detect every one who has gum, paper, rubber or anything else in his mouth, you will soon break up the habit, even if there is no penalty, or at least a trifling one. But if the pupil finds he can chew his gum about half the time, undiscovered, he will, invariably, run the risk of detection, and even a severe punishment, rather than give up the practice.

Again, take a case where pupils are noisy in the absence of the teacher, by persistently ascertaining, *every time* you leave the room, who makes the trouble, the fault can be easily cured, by merely administering a mild reproof, or inflicting some slight punishment. If this doesn't answer, take the worst ones with you once or twice, and assure them that if they cannot behave without some one to watch them, they must go with you, and you will seldom be obliged to repeat this many times ; for the other children are your powerful allies here, and will ridicule so unmercifully the boy "who has to go with his teacher," that he is glad to behave himself and stay in the room.

The habit of appointing a monitor during absence, is disastrous in the extreme. It is bad for the pupils, and worse for the monitor. It allows the children to see that you *do* not trust them, and soon you *cannot*. While it fosters in the monitor the detestable spirit of tale-bearing, and is a strong temptation to exaggerate the faults of enemies and ignore those of friends. Never exhort, but express approval or disapproval in as few words as possible. Never threaten, and never promise without fulfilling. Do not use the same punishment too many times. It gets to be an old story, and the trespassers know what to expect, and are prepared for it ; and it often happens that what punishes one severely, will tickle the fancy of another, and he will commit the fault on purpose to be punished. Of course, such a one should always be disappointed, and either not punished at all, or in an opposite manner. Many of the "hard cases" that come to us, are bad solely be-

cause they crave notoriety, and will endure almost any punishment to secure it. Such children should be ignored as much as possible, and if punished at all, it should be done in such a manner as to attract no attention from the other pupils. Some punishment that is useful, is probably the best, such as neatly copying a difficult lesson, or something of that kind ; and no work given as a punishment should ever be accepted by the teacher unless it is executed as neatly and accurately as the child is capable of executing it.

The practice of giving pupils several hundred words to write, and thus allowing them to write such words as : are, it, etc., over as many times as they please, and in as slovenly a manner as they please, is, we think, unwise. The pupil will often brag of how many words he writes nightly, and will write them in an incredibly short space of time. Better give a few hard words, and require him to arrange them properly, and write them neatly, that it may be a lesson to him in writing and spelling (or some other study), as well as a punishment.

To all, then, we would say : Watch closely the "little foxes," and when the order of the room satisfies you, keep it so, by as close attention to study and lessons as to order ; for there is nothing like steady work to keep orderly children in order.

THEOLOGICAL creeds have always appeared to us like systems of penmanship. They are excellent as models for young children ; they give a high ideal ; but whoever follows them mechanically, must be a writing master, or, in a measure, a person destitute of the thinking faculty. No man worth mentioning ever lived that had not a handwriting of his own, legible or otherwise ; and no man ever lived worth naming that had not an idea or two of his own on the subject of greatest concern—religion. The chief trouble is, that the ideas of one man in this respect, like the character of his handwriting, are apt to warp, and cramp, and disfigure other men's ideas for too many years. To this day we suffer from the erratic penmanship and eccentric theology of Augustine and Calvin.

EXAMINERS make a great mistake when they think that because a child fails to answer a question, he has not been taught the subject matter called for by the same. A certain fact may be brought before a class fifty times, and yet, in examination, one-third of the class will answer the point absurdly, or give no answer at all. The writer has brought the principal parts of the verb *lie* (to recline) before his class of twenty, at least twenty times during the present year ; yet the class averaged only 80 per cent. on the following question : " Express, in all the tenses of the indicative mode, the sentence : ' She lies down daily.' " If the question called for "principal parts," or for "synopsis," the average would have been much higher.

Such are the minds of children. A man may drive twenty-four horses, but no living human being can hold the attention of twenty children at all times upon all points of their proper work. So children learn only what they pay attention to. The theological application of the parable of the sower is not half so correct as its educational application. Do what we may, there will be a wayside, and stony ground, and weeds, and wicked little birds to pick up the seed. Examiners seldom take this fact into account. Fanatical schoolmasters try to do at once what the Almighty left for the ages to accomplish. In giving the parable, Jesus shows this state of things to be a fact of nature, and tacitly approves it.

There are minds which yield little grain for the trouble taken to till them. Shall we be discouraged ? By no means.

The whole earth was not cultivated from the beginning—only a little, insignificant patch called the Garden of Eden, so unimportant that its geographical position is still in dispute. Gradual growth is the law of matter and of mind. What if the full benefit of our teaching does not appear in the individual. The cultivation we practice on him, is changing the structure of his brain, and will yield a rich harvest in his grand-children. When a child utters a series of sentences, of whose meaning he is in blissful ignorance, it is easy and consoling to think that he will know all about it in 1890. Much of our instruction, in the time required for its development, is like the seventeen year locust. We are in too great haste to see results. Hot-houses and artificial incubation are too much in vogue. Let us have fewer written examinations. Let us desist from trying to make children know everything accurately at once. Let the bodies and minds of our pupils have a chance to grow.

WE would denounce such educational journals as make a practice of quoting passages hostile to the public schools from the pages of harmless Catholic periodicals, and the sayings of unknown Catholic priests. The plan is to quote the passage, then write: "Comment is unnecessary; we introduce the extract simply to show the animus of that denomination."

Such comments indicate as much bigotry and malevolence as the citations pretend to expose. These editors are malignant hypocrites, and unadulterated humbugs. The great body of Catholic people in this country are not enemies of the public schools. They furnish to the schools their full share of material support and a proportionate share of children. The first need of a school is the building; and when school directors desire good argument in behalf of the erection of a new school house, they have only to enumerate the children of school age in a Catholic district. Moreover, the Catholic advocate of public school education is more zealous than any other, and more powerful; for he knows the strength of the system and the weak spots in the armor of its priestly opponents. The assaults of the Catholic press and clergy upon our schools, are a mere formality—made to keep up a show of consistency—and are wholly ineffectual.

The following will illustrate the situation: A few months ago, a young priest, who came to America to get birth, and went back to Europe to imbibe fanaticism, commenced his usual pulpit fire upon the public schools. He could not help observing the evidences of displeasure in the whole congregation. Waxing wroth, he shrieks: "Ye don't like this talk; but ye must hear it, whether ye like it or not." No, they don't like such talk; nor do we like the insinuations from educational journals, whose stupidity is almost enough to damn the system which they half advocate—hints and insinuations that Catholics as a class are opposed to public school education. The inference which these educational editors intend to have drawn is, that for the sake of the public schools it is necessary to keep up sectarian animosities, and, above all, to keep a sharp eye on the Catholics. Out upon such sneaking bigotry! Its occasional exhibition in the school-room is sufficient explanation of what opposition to the public schools does really exist among Catholics.

WE do not agree with Mr. White, whose article appears in another part of this number, as to what should be the primary object and the guiding principle in the compilation of text-books of reading lessons; but this is a free country, and Mr. White is welcome to express his views.

Do we communicate a sufficient amount of knowledge of local geography to our children? Much as we are inclined to think that the results obtained in that branch are an inadequate compensation for the time spent upon it, we think this question must be answered in the negative. If this be so, such attention should be given to the matter as to remedy the defect. It is submitted that it would be an improvement upon our present methods and results to aim at giving our pupils a closer view of the interior organization of the State and the location of its mineral and other centers and regions, than any they now attain. A great deal has been done, and well done, in the matter of lessening the amount of details to be attended to in general geography. Something has been done to increase the amount of knowledge of local detail. Our present appliances are not sufficient to accomplish all that should be accomplished in this direction. Our pupils or teachers are furnished with no means of making very thorough or exhaustive work of the geography of the county or State.

These remarks are suggested by an examination of Blanchard's Sectional Map of Illinois. We discovered thereon a very magazine of useful and desirable general and local geographical knowledge. There is first a brief, but easily understood explanation and illustration of the wonderfully complete, comprehensive and simple method which the Government of the United States uses in surveying and describing the public lands. Then there is shown the towns, counties, judicial and congressional districts, senatorial districts, the mineral regions, the altitude, rainfall and temperature of the State. This is much more, perhaps, than any of our grades call for at present, but not more than our children should know, when they leave us. We have been so much impressed with the truth of this, that we have procured from John H. Rolfe, the publisher, the above map for use and reference in our own school. We have no hesitation whatever in saying that this map, or one equivalent to it, should be placed in every school in the State of Illinois.

THE drafts drawn upon the capacity of children, in the upper grades, are in excess of their available resources. Children have not the judgment and originality to assimilate the mass of information that graded courses of study usually prescribe. There is, too, less difference between grammar and primary pupils in this respect than is generally supposed. In a strange field of mental labor, grammar children will not do so much better than primary children, as might be expected from the mass of instruction which lies between the extremes of the two departments, or between any two stations thereof. Children in primary grades learn to punctuate better than those do in the grammar grades, when the subject is first presented to them. The same is true in respect to mechanical operations, in numbers, spelling, writing, and committing to memory. There are two periods in mental progress: the mechanical period, and the thinking period; the period of acquirement, and the one of reproduction. Do we not make a mistake by trying to anticipate the latter period?

Young children can be taught to do wonders if their minds be not confused and their efforts paralyzed by our demanding of them an amount of analysis, classification, and generalization for which they have neither the faculty nor the material on which to exercise the faculty, nor the experience to guide them in such exercise. Do we not waste effort in shaking the tree before the fruit is ripe; in striking before the iron is hot?

The *ed-u-ca-tion-al* theories of the revivalists are impracticable in graded schools. Such theories can be carried on

only in the education of princes and a few other fortune-favored mortals. Our chief aim should be to give knowledge, and facility in the use of it, incidentally developing enough thought to grasp the knowledge and retain it. The process of digestion is involuntary. So with the assimilation of mental food. All wanted is the food under healthy conditions, and time. We do our duty when we place the food before our pupils. Occasionally, we should guide the weak hand of a paralytic, and slap an urchin on the back when in danger of choking with too large a piece, or a tough one. We insist that we are not bound to follow the food through all the processes of digestion, or to separate at last the nutriment from the unused elements.

Public schools should be the people's schools—practical schools—and children should be literally put through them. By dropping our educational vagaries, and turning our hand to good, old-fashioned teaching, we could send many children out of school, well up in the common branches, that now leave school almost ignorant. Until a child enters the first grade, his teaching should contemplate a business life rather than a college education. In this connection we desire to state, the vocal music and drawing should be considered elementary branches.

No improvement in our school work has had more taking and telling effect than the improved work in musical instruction. In our school days, *Home, Sweet Home*, and *The Star Spangled Banner*, learned by rote, and performed by throat—the former was a whine, and the latter a shriek; but, learned by note and sung artistically, as they are done now in our schools, the former gives a higher charm to the idea of the sanctity, beauty, poetry and love of home, and the latter makes patriotism a real presence.

EXPLANATIONS IN ARITHMETIC.

ONE of the soundest thinkers and most efficient school officers in New England is, Henry F. Harrington, Superintendent of the schools of the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts. From his late report we take the extract found below, concerning points in school management of much interest.

—Pennsylvania School Journal

While thus engaged, my attention was arrested, as never before, by the character of the recitations in Arithmetic. I found that more than half the time of those recitations was spent in explanations of the abstract theory of numbers, and of the processes by which the arithmetical work was to be performed; and in efforts to make the scholars understand them. This is in strict accordance with the requisites of the Manual, which, following the lead of public opinion, enjoins it on the teachers to train scholars so that they may be able to give an intelligent explanation of all the work they may do. Then I was led to make inquiries how far these elaborated and reiterated explanations of processes were of advantage; how many remembered them, giving evidence that they had sunk into their minds, and been added to their stores of intelligence. And from the united grammar corps of teachers, with scarce an exception, came the emphatic response that such instruction is a waste of time; that the philosophy of the processes of arithmetical work is almost invariably beyond the capacities of the scholars at the time when those processes are necessary for their practice and advancement. For no matter how thoroughly it may be explained, it is speedily forgotten by the great majority.

I subsequently made careful tests of the truth of these statements, and was surprised to find in what an intellectual muddle many of our scholars exhibited themselves to be on

the points in question, even those in the High School. And I discovered this fact also, the importance of which was not lost upon me, that the most were not able to work out on their slates, promptly and correctly, the problems which might be given to them. Then I reflected that since this slate work—this practical evidence that their minds can readily grasp the conditions of a problem, and have learned to apply processes rapidly and correctly to its solution, is, after all, the chief source of the good to be derived from the study of Arithmetic, whether as regards mental discipline, ability to put the faculties down to hard, methodical, thorough work, or the practical use of the study in after life, it would be far better that the effort wasted upon the explanation of processes should cease, and the time thus gained be divided between an increased amount of good, faithful slate work and the studies which are now clamoring for due attention.

Then I sought information as to the state of things in this connection in other communities; and learned that in other High Schools, even where the systems of instruction maintain the best reputation, it is found, just as it has been demonstrated in our own, that the majority of scholars do not profit by the explanations which are elaborated at such an expense of effort and time in the grammar schools; that they retain no clear, intelligent memory of them. The companion fact in relation to slate work, which has been noticed in connection with our own High School, was fully paralleled in these others. For I was told that sufficient slate work to make the scholars ready, accurate, and trustworthy in the practical application of the study, had been sacrificed in this abortive attempt to teach them its philosophy; and so neither was successful.

Pursuing my investigations still further, I learned to my surprise, that in Prussia, where the schools are strictly regulated by the Government, the teachers of the elementary schools are forbidden to give any instruction in the theory of numbers and the philosophy of the processes of work.* it being declared that slate work, that is the practical application of processes to problems, is the method of most advantage to scholars in every sense, and the only method for which time can be spared,

THE TEACHER has expressed similar opinions repeatedly; yet in this city and elsewhere, time is wasted on the philosophy of arithmetic. We do not object to definitions. Teacher and pupil need technical expressions as an economical medium of communication. Children should be taught to say "product," not "what you get when you multiply;" but beyond this, the theory of arithmetic is a hindrance. Drill in it makes children slow, inaccurate and verbose. Moreover, they do not accomplish anything in the theory, while time spent in it is lost to the practice which the child needs. Most children never comprehend the philosophy of arithmetic, and few even apprehend it. They learn words and memorize processes to be forgotten the next day or the next week. A child is, or is not, to be a scholar. If he is to be a scholar, he will in algebra and geometry learn the underlying principles of arithmetic; if not destined to be a scholar, his time in school will be employed best in acquiring facility in practical operations with numbers. So, too, with etymology. Much time is now wasted in seeking the derivation of words. Knowledge so gained will be to one not destined to be a scholar a mere expensive curiosity; and one who is to be a scholar will learn as much etymology in a few weeks spent in the study of Latin as he would acquire in the same number of years spent in blindly handling prefixes, suffixes, and inseparable roots in the district school. We deplore the tendency of the times to make hash of the sciences, that children may be scientifically hash-fed with a spoon. But the most ludicrous sight of all is the spectacle of an examiner trying to extort the philosophy of arithmetic from a child eight or nine years old.

* That part of arithmetical instruction, which is specifically termed "mental arithmetic," is expressly excluded from the Prussian schools, as it deals mainly with abstract numbers. The government "Regulations" call it "a useless fatigue of the brain."

PURGATORY AND PARADISE.

Near the close of a year spent in a school numbering nearly 1,400 children (average number belonging), without a single case of corporal punishment or of suspension for misconduct, we are tempted to make a contrast of the old dispensation and the new. In the old dispensation, Calisthenics, Oral Lessons and Corporal Punishment flourished. In the new dispensation, the hobbies of the old are crippled, and that of corporal punishment has totally disappeared. Witness the revolution.

OLD DISPENSATION.

Theory—thrashing. Practice—thrashing. Result—more thrashing. The Principal of a school—a patent thrashing machine—tries to hear a class recite. He is interrupted with: "Miss Wilson wants you to lick a boy in Room No. 9!"—which he does. He returns to finish the lesson, but no sooner has he reached, "What next?" than a piping voice exclaims, "Mr. Blank, Miss Brown wants you." Now, Mr. Blank knows that Miss Brown wants him—knows it in his heart—but this announced want is not legitimate; it is merely a matter of thrashing. So his examination of a class is broken in upon by orders to flog a child for being saucy to Miss Nokes, or looking askance at Miss Stokes, or making a wry face at Miss Styles, or refusing to answer Miss Jones, or leaving out the *p* in the name of Miss Thompson. Was there order? None. Riots alternated with flagellations, on the principle of reflex action. A teacher could not brush away a fly but all her pupils would dodge, not knowing which head was to be hit, whereupon all hands were whacked—for dodging! Mischief and defiance in the child; sternness and severity in the teacher. Corporal punishment reports thick as leaves in Valambrosa; altercations frequent and fearful; truancy and insolence the order of the day.

Look at us in the

NEW DISPENSATION.

No discipline, in the low sense of the word; no need of it. What have we, instead? Quiet order, diligent application, peace. Every child feels that he must behave himself in school because he *knows* he must do so. Children at ease; teachers attending to the business of instruction exclusively, not spending their precious time in reaching the obscure portion of children's bodies with a piece of wood or leather, whether round or flat.

The present state of school teaching in this city is superior to any future beatific situation we have yet heard described. Dante's *Paradiso* comes nearest to it. If he has celestial precedencies, we have our accredited grades. And if the test of imparting highest pleasure be excellence in music, we can distance the hosts of Dante; for, to execute our music, we have human entities; while Dante has only tongueless, lungless, throatless shades.

The achievements in music have been the most distinguishing feature of this decade of educational experience. Arranged for their voices in three parts, by Messrs. Whittemore & Blackman, the productions of the most charming German composers are sung by the pupils—sung with the fervor of youthful enthusiasm and the perfection of musical art. In listening to one of these performances by our pupils, we are reminded of Shelley's sky-lark, or of Moore's reciting his own touching songs in the salons of the British nobility, whose institutions he upbraided, while he moved their hearts with his plaintive melodies.

This state of things is pleasant, profitable, beautiful. When a teacher has educated his pupils, patrons and board, up to the point at which they do not expect him to flog children, for love, fear or money—up to the belief that he will not be bullied or irritated or bribed into walloping children, he has made for himself such a bed of comfort as few people have a chance to lie on. This bed, as enjoyed in Chicago to-day, is too luxurious to be described in Western phrase. It is like a seat on the skiff of the dreamer of the Arabian Nights, sailing by Bagdad's spires of fretted gold. It is like a sojourn in that country where it is always afternoon, with the added influence of the clime where it is always morning.

St. Brandon, in his travels, discovered an isle whose trees were laden with blossoms which closed at night to open in the morning, and let out from each calyx a merry little bird. His legend is at last explained. Compared with the cage and prison that it was of yore, the school-house to-day is a living tree holding its hundreds and hundreds with a restraint that is well represented by the cup of a flower; and children, so imprisoned for rest and protection, need only the morning light of intelligent management, and the mild atmosphere of kind treatment, to wake them to charming, bird-like activity. Heaven is a state from which all bad spirits are banished, and all evil passions removed. With the rod discarded, there exist in each well-regulated school the essentials of a little heaven.

It may be inquired what power has brought about this change in the school affairs of this city. We answer, The notion of one man. Superintendent Pickard, two years ago, requested teachers to manage their schools without the use of corporal punishment: and all the pleasant results which we in this article have attempted to describe, have flowed from the suggestion. It is as if an educational Messiah had touched the earth, bringing on the Saturnian age of school government—a true pedagogical millennium.

Lo! earth receives him from the bending skies;
Bow down, ye mountains, and ye valleys, rise!

There is only one language in which this educational epoch—may it be millennial!—can be adequately saluted. That language is the Irish: Period of Pedagogical Peace,

CEAD MILE FEALTHE!

STUDYING formal definitions in reading is little better than a waste of time. Definitions, to give a knowledge of the technicalities of a particular branch, are necessary; but to obtain a knowledge of the meaning of words, as words, the best plan is to assign a paragraph or more, and let pupils look up, in the dictionary, or some other book of reference, the meaning of such words as are strange to them. This plan shows the use of the word in its context, and when mistakes are made, and ludicrous ones will often occur, the placing of the word in a sentence with its other meaning affords a good exercise in language.

At the last meeting of the Chicago Principals' Association, the resolution to the effect that much of the time spent on oral instruction is wasted, was adopted. This will not cause that class of instruction to be discontinued, however. Mr. Pickard's exposition of the object of oral teaching was admirable and convincing. He will arrange the course of study so that his views may be carried out, and doubtless the methods of teaching oral will be improved. The speeches on the resolution showed that the only difficulty was in our present faulty methods of teaching.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

LOUIS AGASSIZ, TEACHER.

"Louis Agassiz, Teacher." So?
 "Written, too, in his own hand?" No!
 "Teacher?" Agassiz? Can't be true!
 Give the Danbury man his due!

How's that? "Found in his will?" Looks bad.
 Why, the man must have been stark mad!
 Heirs won't fall of much sleep o' nights
 If that's all that can bar their rights.

"Teacher?" Nay! Let us spare the dead!
 Quite respectable, too, 'tis said;
 So soon after his taking off,
 Don't defame him! Pray, make it Prof.

"A museum!" Ah! I see; yes!
 Makes a difference, I confess;
 Somewhat pleasanter to be dunne,
 If you call it a "Teachers' Fund."

Great relief in a world of ills,
 When the doctors prescribe sweet pills;
 Then the doctors, so sleek and fat,—
 "Children cry for it,"—Pass the hat!

O, Diogenes, pinch your wick!
 You are beaten at that old trick,
 We have hit on a better way;
 Called him "Teacher," and made it pay.

Lo! a wonder! Behold at last,
 All the world open-mouthed, agast,—
 One man found, who has boldly said:
 "Write me Teacher!" The man is dead!

Outraged Nature made quick revolt,
 Shrieking shrill to life's forces: "Halt!"
 Not much wonder the great heart broke.
 Dead! Poor Agassiz! Had a stroke.

O poor teachers! The chance is yours!
 His abasement your fame secures.
 Let one monument, one, arise—
 "Here a man and a teacher lies."

—George Howland.

GET THE BEST.

"Get the best," say the makers of our dictionaries, and so say the suppliers of all our wants, physical, mental and moral. In every avocation of life, it is not only the duty of man to do the best in his peculiar sphere of action, but it is equally his duty to get the best from those under his special direction. In the education of youth, as in the acquisition of fame, wealth, knowledge, influence, or position, no one should be satisfied with mediocre results, if better are attainable through honorable exertion. The desire to get the best, which seems so widely prevalent among all races and conditions of men, should not be permitted to exclusively characterize those whose activities are chiefly concerned with material things. The developers of mind, the creators of intellectual energy, should not be behind their co-laborers of the laboratory, office, shop, factory, and farm, in their efforts to secure the best results which it is their business to produce.

Perfect mental discipline, combined with moral culture, is at once and by all admitted to be the prime object of education. But he who extensively and carefully examines the educational processes by which the majority of teachers, in the schools of our country, endeavor to secure this desideratum, making due allowance for the slowness of all substantial

growth, will be forced to the conclusion that the efforts for the accomplishment of this great and noble purpose, make a much better appearance, and promise more satisfactory results in the pages of an educational journal than in the daily doings of most school-rooms. That the best, or at least better results, might be obtained through greater zeal, earnestness, and fidelity, through a deeper insight into the nature and purpose of education, through a truer conception of the character and possibilities of the being to be educated, no one can doubt.

Let us glance at a widely extended cause that disappoints the hopes of parents and the expectations of society, frustrates the most philosophically devised plans, and neutralizes and counteracts the most skilfully directed efforts of school officers in their attempts to make available, in the highest degree, the educational advantages so liberally furnished in this land. He who occupies the responsible position of Superintendent of the schools of a large city, and has under his immediate supervision five hundred or a thousand teachers of both sexes, of all degrees of intellectual attainment, experience and success, must frequently have observed that failure to secure the best results, which the adopted system of instruction is capable of producing, when rationally applied, can be satisfactorily attributed to no other cause than the want of a well, or even partially developed imagination in the teacher. The commonest observation shows most conclusively that he who acts without a well-defined ideal of what he is to do, and how it should be done, must waste a great amount of energy, though with much pains and assiduity he may be moderately successful. Not in teaching, not in any other vocation, can superior excellence be attained by hard work alone. He but beats the air, or lashes the sea, whose unremitting and indefatigable labor lacks the directive power of an ideal far beyond anything previously achieved, beyond, one may almost say, that which is, under ordinary circumstances, achievable. It is true that some eminent writers have inclined to the belief that the imagination needs no special cultivation; that whatever special training the other faculties of the mind may need to promote their proper development, the imagination is able to take care of itself, or at least needs but little assistance from other sources than those which nature has provided for the growth of all the mind's powers. But the profoundest educational thinkers agree in the opinion that the right culture and development of no other mental faculty can more richly reward the labors of the teacher. It is a cultivated imagination only that can supply those high ideas of order, system, discipline and instruction, in the complete realization of which consists the most perfect efficiency of any school. There is much inefficient government, much poor intellectual discipline, for which the teachers in whose schools such defects occur, can assign no adequate or satisfactory cause. Even the attentive and discriminating visitor, witnessing, as he often does, the most admirable display of enthusiasm, energy, vivacity, cheerfulness, patience, perseverance, and perhaps other essential requisites of successful teacher, confesses his inability to comprehend the cause of failure in the midst of circumstances which apparently make exclusively for success. By the keener penetration of a cultivated and active imagination, the mystery is speedily resolved. It is at once perceived that the most assiduous exertions, undirected by an ever-present ideal excellence, must in many, if not most instances, prove futile. Without the previous creation of an ideal perfection, there can seldom be an approximate corresponding reality. In order, then, that a teacher may obtain the best results from his own labor, let him adopt any available means for the highest cultivation of his mind's creative power.

At the present time, there may be nothing which so powerfully militates against the achievement of the highest intellectual and moral results by young teachers, as the almost universal tendency to permit the creative power of the mind to sleep after graduation from the seminary, normal school, high school or college. An observer of the intellectual habits of many youthful teachers, would certainly suppose that they had forgotten that the chief use of those institutions is to put the mind of the student in a condition to continue successfully the course of intellectual development so auspiciously begun under their supervision. This reprehensible practice, which should not be designated by a milder epithet, is a most prolific source of evil, especially in the schools of large cities, where teachers of little experience permit their minds to become so deeply engrossed with the real or fancied requirements of social life, as to leave little time, inclination, or strength to be devoted to the attainment of the best results so imperatively demanded by their profession. What can secure continued mental application of young teachers, from which may result more perfect ideals of excellence in the lower and most important departments of educational work? What can counteract the tendency to degeneracy so likely to ensue after the fervor of early experience shall have passed away? What can eradicate the feeling of satisfaction with which many teachers who have achieved only partial success, view their comparatively mediocre results? As an excuse for neglecting or refusing to heed these questions, it is easy to plead insufficiency of time, mental and physical exhaustion, multifarious cares and duties of other kinds; but in view of the splendid examples of devotion to professional duty recently presented to us, the neglect alluded to must be regarded as resulting from infirmity of will rather than from uncontrollable circumstances.

That the teacher may get the best results from his pupils, the ideal faculty of their minds should receive early and constant attention. The activity of memory begins at an earlier age than that of the image-forming power; but is it not a mistake to assume that no attention need be given to the development of the latter till pupils have passed into the higher grades of schools? Whoever carefully observes the intellectual operations of intelligent children, cannot fail to discover that the imagination is far from being dormant, even in infancy. Is not this precisely what we should expect if, as is asserted, the activity of the ideal faculty is based upon that of the perceptive powers? Whose minds are so sensitive to impressions made by external things as those of children? At times, children's minds seem to lack sensibility to impressions made through certain senses. This insensibility may be merely apparent, and may result from the concentration of the mind upon other sensations or perceptions. Happy would it be for the children, and equally happy for their subsequent teachers, could this power of concentrating the attention be continued to a later period of school life.

Nature begins the process of ideal development before children pass into the hands of less perfect teachers, and she will readily impart a knowledge of her methods to all diligent and patient observers of her operations. Do not self-interest and duty equally urge teachers to promote the development of a faculty whose correct action may aid them in making their schools, in all respects, models of excellence? Every teacher should desire to get the best results from his pupils in deportment. There can be no reasonable doubt that the misdeeds of pupils result largely from inability to form a correct ideal of conduct, in consequence of defective or undeveloped imaginative power. Whatever portion of misconduct may be prop-

erly charged to forgetfulness or perversity, a large part must still be attributed to the absence of a standard of right, by frequent reference to which conduct may be regulated.

It is true that the formation of a high ideal standard of excellence, in any department of human thought and action, involves prolonged, and in many cases, profound study, which may be almost entirely beyond the possibilities of pupils. But he who perceives the necessity for the existence of such a standard, by example, precept and illustration, may do much to aid in its creation. When it is remembered that the ungracious manners and conduct of later life result to great extent from ignorance of what is excellent in society, nothing more would be necessary to convince teachers that they cannot do a greater service to parents, pupils and to society, than to strive earnestly to quicken and strengthen the imaginative faculty of their pupils. No exact rules can be given by which teachers can get from their pupils the most desirable results. Each one must work in his own way, modified and improved by assimilating the best information obtainable from other sources. To depend chiefly upon the ingenuity of others—an inclination too frequently observed—for the discovery and invention of methods which each should work out for himself, is not conducive to the highest efficiency. A clear and definite purpose, an earnest spirit, a will undaunted by failures, will secure large, if not complete success. In these days, when muscular suasion in schools is so universally deprecated, and its ultimate virtue so generally denied, teachers may find an additional incentive to strive for the establishment of a correct standard of conduct in the mind of every pupil, through the exercise of his imaginative power.

No one conversant with the results of numerous written examinations of older pupils, can have failed to notice a remarkable contrast between averages obtained in branches in the study of which memory plays the most important part, and those obtained in studies which require considerable activity of the imaginative faculty. Pupils who secure the most satisfactory results in examinations in which only the reproductive faculties are called into exercise, frequently fall far below mediocrity in all exercises involving the operation of comparison, the perception of relation, the activity of reason in demonstration, or the creation of new out of given forms. It is frequently noticed, in arithmetical recitations, written as well as oral, that pupils accustomed to uninterrupted uniformity of style in the phraseology of problems, are entirely bewildered by slight transformations in the grammatical structure of the questions. The makers of arithmetics have observed this growing tendency of the mind, and are endeavoring to correct the defects resulting from it, by introducing considerable variety into the phraseology of problems. The most reasonable and efficacious mode of correcting the mind's inefficiency when out of its groove, or off its track, is to cultivate its creative power from the earliest to the latest period of school life.

—E. C. Delano.

THE SAME, CONTINUED.

When *Blue Beard* says that "the education of the majority of lady teachers is not sufficient to enable them to successfully discharge the duties of the principalship," he makes a statement that is palpably untrue; since an examination, be it ever so cursory, into the duties of a Principal, will prove that his work lies not so much in teaching as in general management, which requires no deep knowledge of books, but only a liberal

allowance of common sense, and a skill in which the arts of the politician play a very large part. In dispensing with the second examination in the case of ladies promoted to the principalship, the Board of Education tacitly makes this admission.

In both of the District Schools of our city controlled by ladies, the Principals had previously held the position of head assistant in the same schools. As such they gave satisfaction, and the knowledge of what they had done led the School Board to put them in larger fields as disciplinarians, tacticians, and supervisors, rather than as teachers whose brains were to undergo more serious tests than had hitherto been applied.

Does *Blue Beard* presume to say that head assistants are not called upon to teach subjects as intricate and abstruse as any in which the Principal figures as teacher?

Allow us to throw a little light on this matter. The Rules say: "Principals shall devote a portion of their time to class instruction." This means instruction in First Grade, usually, first division always. Who gives the rest of this instruction? The head assistant, of course. And there is no single branch of study in First Grade, that, in one school or another, is not taught by the head assistant. In each of the different schools, since there is no arbitrary assignment of subjects, the Principal makes his choice of the branches he prefers to teach, the head assistant taking the rest. In some cases, we are told, the Principal keeps the general records of the school, thus throwing more class instruction upon the head assistant. By this action he virtually confesses her ability to do the work, and at the same time he virtually confesses her fitness for the principalship, in case of his own demise or translation. Any meddling on his part with her classes, even did he desire to supplement her efforts, would be tolerated neither by her nor by those to whom only she is accountable. But the male principal does not hunger to do this. He is very willing that she should perform the labor, knowing that in the event of her failure to do the work thoroughly, it will be comparatively easy to secure her removal, and to have somebody put in her place who is competent to relieve him from the arduous labor and responsibility of teaching. Point us, if you can, to any Principal who ever grumbled, publicly or privately, at the amount of labor the head assistant of his school had the temerity to perform.

We have thus referred to the first division, because we have naturally drawn the inference that it is there the best education on the part of teachers is required. A careful investigation shows us that any person starting out to teach on no higher educational basis than the equivalent of that received in our First Grade—always granting that she has a mind of ordinary calibre—can, by care and cultivation, reach a point which will fit her not only for the position of head assistant or principal of some district school, but, possibly, such is the uncertain course of human events, for something even higher. Instead of proving woman's incapacity, by citing the case which he gives with so much gusto, he simply proves her capacity to rise as soon as the downward pressure is removed. All honor to the head assistant, who, with no broader foundation, held her own in competition with those more liberally educated at the first! Tally another for our side.

But, further; when *Blue Beard* attempts to lower a lady in the estimation of the public by casting slurs upon the ability of her predecessor, he does a thing as illogical as irretrievably foolish. We have heard of a parallel case, in the man who claimed relationship with his neighbor on the ground that said

neighbor's cow had crossed his garden. He might as well say outright: Your predecessor was uneducated, therefore you are an ignoramus.

The facts in the case are really these, as we have the means of knowing. Both of the lady principals of District Schools in our city are ladies of culture and refinement, well versed in the standard literature of the time, and even now busy students, if there can be study outside of class connection, which *Blue Beard* may, perhaps, deny. One of them was thoroughly educated—classically educated—and, previous to her connection with the schools of Chicago, had occupied prominent positions in High Schools elsewhere; and would to-day, in point of intellect, compare more than favorably with the majority of the men holding similar positions in this or any other city.

Put a lady possessing the above qualifications beside a male principal who blandly asks, as his eye falls upon a copy of James Russell Lowell's works: "Who is Lowell, and what did he write?" The question was not of the Mark Twain order, either. And yet that man is one of the most successful Principals in our city, at present writing, conducting his large school with an ability never shown by many a man whose scholastic acquirements shine with far more luster.

We point to him and others of his class to prove that it certainly is not their education which has kept them in their places; while at the same time we will not say they are not good teachers. We claim that the faculty of imparting the information which one possesses goes farther to determine a teacher's success than his profundity. Is it not the experience of every teacher that the best educated are not always the best instructors—that a homely illustration, coming in crude form from one who has himself but just learned its value, will frequently outweigh the finer, polished thought of the finished scholar, who, with the truth in beautiful completeness in his own mind, neglects to give its simple elements to the learners before him; while they, staggered by entirety, hopelessly ignorant, bemoan the cloudy explanation?

But do not infer from this, good friends, that we undervalue education, or education of a superior kind, in the school-room. Far from it. But we do say, this alone can never make a good teacher nor a good Principal. There are other elements as essential, and we insist that culture and education may be reached outside the school-room; so that a teacher's power is not to be measured by the number of days which she has attended school as a pupil. We will concede that, to one holding *Blue Beard's* somewhat primitive views, the fact that lady teachers do not order their reading matter through the editor of *THE TEACHER*, should prove conclusively that they have none of a high order. But though with pain we say it, we will venture to affirm, there can't be found, living and in good health, to-day, outside the ranks of teachers, as many as one hundred intelligent people in this city who are under the same ban. And we further affirm, that many of these traitorous wretches may at times be discovered with literature in their hands which ignorant humanity will contend to be of quite as profound a character as any magazine named by the gentleman whose amicable statements we are engaged in controverting.

We are also informed that there are other sources through which these same magazines, and others akin to them, can be obtained; and that many people, even teachers, have had the insolence to go directly to the publishers for what they wanted. Yet with this horrid truth, this terrible heresy, staring us in the face, we now repeat, that in point of education, ability, talent, culture, and refinement, an equal number of ladies drawn pro-

miscuously from the ranks of our maturer teachers would put the male principals to the blush.

That the Board of Education has been compelled to lower its examination standard in order to obtain teachers, has no bearing on the question of woman's competence or education. It only proves practically that the salaries paid teachers by this city are not sufficiently high to lure them from other cities where the expense of living is not so great, the work less wearing, and the possibility of advancement an event in the near future. What is true of any other self-supporting part of the community, is true of teachers: Demand regulates compensation, and compensation supply.

We are inferentially assured that all the hard cases in our schools are the sons of widows. Perhaps they are, but there is some satisfaction in the belief that we are not to hold these same widows responsible for the shortcomings of their sons, since we have it on the best authority, that "The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children."

Blue Beard claims to be in sympathy with the earnest workers of the land in their attempts to place woman where she belongs, by giving her all her rights, legal and social, etc.; but when one takes such circumscribed views of what constitutes the rights of woman, when he would curtail the privileges which she, a being co-equal with man, demands as her own, when, judging of the mass by the weaker specimens, who are in truth but abortions of the species, he emphatically denies that, allowing all her mental faculties their fullest scope, can ever succeed in placing her on the same platform with himself, a life-worker with him, both proving by their united efforts valuable to the world in which they live; he takes the pith from his concession and throws us the husk. Almost with the same breath in which he declares himself for the onward movement of our sex, he proclaims the impossibility of our ever being able to gain and successfully hold the monstrous height on which he stands—the position of Principal in a District School. "Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts," to dash to pieces those of us who look with longing eyes to the \$2,200 a year so long sacred to the other sex!

All this fol-de-rol comes with an ill-grace and little modesty from one whose own school stood, in the Spring Examination which occurred in the interim between his last two articles, below the school of one of these same ladies whom he is holding up to the world as patterns of inefficiency, while that of the other ranked eleven in a list of twenty-six. This latter is the same school which he so courteously ignored in his 1873 statistics. The school which, albeit it counted five failures among its candidates sent to the High School, over 100 per cent. of its First Grade average daily attendance for the year, the school in which the teachers succeeded in promoting thirteen out of fourteen pupils who had been in First Grade four months only, when the full time for that grade is ten months. This number alone was as great as that of the entire class sent from several schools, as the 1873 Report will show. Truly, that lady principal must be a miserably poor apology for a teacher.

Not to be too inquisitive; we beg to ask, *sub rosa*, if *Blue Beard* proposes to illustrate to his class the synopsis of the verb *to squirm* through the first person, singular.

Because we say no man in his senses would reduce Miss Mitchell's salary on the ground of her being a woman, our friend says we have no conception of a man's nature. Perhaps we haven't; but if we have erred in this statement, thank Heaven, it is on the side of clemency, and we do not wish our minds disabused of the pleasing illusion. (How *Blue Beard* must feel to be accused publicly of being a woman!)

Whiskers, we thank you for your generously proffered assistance, but we don't want it. We will stand or fall of ourselves; and when *Blue Beard*, out of the depths of his fatal chamber, brings forth another ponderous weapon, we have one to meet it. We are inside the ring, and know fully what we are talking about. He has more than once accused us of being illogical. Behold, how in several instances, he flatly contradicts his own assertions; and though professedly standing shoulder with the editor of *THE TEACHER*, he has gone so far beyond him as to say that women cannot teach school as well as men can—an assertion for which he will find little support. Perhaps, if we could get as teachers a class of men who rank among their fellows as our best lady teachers rank among their own sex, the difference in results might for a time be perceptible; but we cannot. That class of men will not go into the common school business to stay, so the trial goes by default.

Knowing *Blue Beard* so well, we must do him the justice to admit that he is a highly educated man, and with large capacity for a different kind of labor; but he has long allowed his talents to rust, and, as may be clearly seen, is fast getting into that peculiarly unhappy condition of irritability to which we have alluded in a former article. Can all this bitterness, so rancorous in its effects, have grown out of conflicts with women teachers who had brains of their own direct from the Fountain of all intelligence, instead of receiving them at second hand from the superior power and wisdom of a male principal? If he would devote a portion of his time to persuading the officials of that western city which has such a poor lot of teachers to raise salaries and give the Superintendent a rest, he would be doing posterity a kindness, and we predict that the reflex action would prove of benefit to him who would thus have cast his bread upon the waters.

As we are not writing an essay upon Love and Matrimony, we will say nothing which may bear upon these all-engrossing topics. When we do write an article of this kind, we propose sending it to the *Bazar*, *St. Nicholas*, or *Scribner's*, and not to an educational magazine. Meanwhile, we trust this "love of a husband" will make no more harrowing allusions to "the comforts of a home" and the delights of eating bread and butter which somebody else has provided.

—*Incarnate Negation.*

"LAY ON, MACDUFF!"

Here they come, horse, foot and dragoons! *Incarnate Negation*, Two LADY READERS, LADY PRINCIPAL, and WHISKERS! That last shot was too much for them; like Lamb's "last piece of oyster pie," it "did the business!" How the bile flows! *Incarnate* boils over with charges of "malice," "chronic tendency to misrepresent," and threats of "unpleasant development" (bring them on); the *Lady Principal*, beside hurling at us the epithet *Yankee*, virtually accuses us of lying; while *Whiskers*, rushing, in the haste and ardor of his gallantry, to the rescue of his adored friend, works himself into a frenzy of rage, tosses himself in his fury, and charges upon the foe with all the valor and skill of Don Quixote in his attack on the wind-mills, and with like results to himself. "Men," he exclaims, in his terrible wrath, "have more of the devil in their composition than women;" if there were 700 men teachers here, "at least two per cent. of them (why not say twenty per cent., or fifty?) would be in jail before the end of one year!" And he boldly asserts that all the nastinesses of Flor-

ence McCarthy's late trial would be as nothing to the iniquities of the 700, who would have "no terrors of their own damnation before their eyes!"

Mercy on us! Let us be thankful that there are but "30" men teachers, and pray that there may never be 700! The morals of the community would be inexpressibly shocked; the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah would be eclipsed; but—how the circulation of the *Sunday Times* would be increased!

"Men have more of the devil in their composition than women," this Solon says, notwithstanding the poet warns us that

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

and yet he "admits that the greatest portion of the misery brought upon society is caused by the petty strifes, vanity of person and dress, selfishness, extravagance, ignorance or disregard of what they exist for, and many other crimes of which the sex are guilty." That is, notwithstanding man is thoroughly possessed of the devil, and woman is comparatively free from Satan's influence, most of the evil in the world is caused by woman! Man, with the devil's help, can't do much harm; but woman, unaided, has ruined the race by what Cutter would call her "pure cussedness!" The logic of I. N.'s new ally is a blunderbuss that does more damage at the breech than at the muzzle.

Three other remarks are made by this logician. First, "that women are not angels," which, we submit, is rather a *mild* conclusion from the above; second, "I place but little faith in the acts of ladies generally," which we think rather unkind, and though in harmony with "the contempt that I have for women," rather a singular expression to come from a man who would place the education of our children wholly in the hands of women; and, third, "that women are more moral than men." This latter seems to be slightly at variance with the charge upon women of "the greatest portion of misery," etc., but we presume he means more moral than his ideal 700.

If, as *Whiskers* asserts, men principals are more successful in ridding the schools of incompetent teachers than women, by all means employ men principals! For whose sake does the man strive to purge his school of the dry-rot, sometimes at the risk of his own head, if not for the children's and the community's? If the best teachers leave the primary schools, as they always do, according to W., put some enterprising young men in those primary schools, and watch the result.

But here is W.'s grand argument, from which he concludes that women are "better fitted" for principals than men. Observe. "All the grades in the district and primary schools of this city are taught by ladies. Now, if a lady is competent to manage the *parts* of a school as well as a man [he is *very careful* NOT to say 'as well as a man' in the preceding sentence], can it be said that she cannot manage the *whole* school as well as a man?" There! Of course that is evident. A corporal can command a regiment; a lieutenant is perfectly competent for the duties of commander-in-chief; any teacher in town will discharge Mr. Pickard's duties equally as well as he, and for a tenth part of the money! Alas, poor *Whiskers*!

But W.'s communication is as full of logic (!) as an egg is of meat. His familiarity with the proceedings of the Board leads him to say, "Great as is the excess of lady teachers over gentlemen, the questionable acts of about five gentlemen to one lady have been before the Board of Education for settlement. For the past three years, no lady's name has been before the Board for misconduct." As five times o is 0, we ought to conclude

that "about" o gentlemen have been investigated by the Board for the past three years. That is doing very well, considering their disadvantages, so much of the devil in them, etc. Thirty of them for three years are equivalent to ninety for one year. "Two per cent." of 90 is 1.8. There should have been, according to W.'s reckoning, nearly two of them in jail by this time. The only trouble that we outsiders know of, lately, is that caused by the generous attempt of a man principal to act the part of father to another man's child—an act of which, of course, no lady principal could be guilty, but which received the hearty approbation of the best men in the community.

The article of the "Lady Principal" is largely composed of whinings about unfair questions and marks, and insinuations of want of truth in *Blue Beard*, who does not propose to engage in a "You did" and "You didn't" argument. If she can take any comfort from the "small per cent. in favor of lady principals," in the refuse of the Vienna papers, etc., she must be thankful for small favors. Her peroration is very like an owl. Pshaw! If you have any "inferences," woman, out with them.

Much of I. N.'s article is based upon ignorance of the school, and carries with it its own refutation to the minds of all acquainted with our system. We would not, for a moment, intimate our doubt of her assertion in matters of fact; and we must believe her when she says, "We have the assurance of two competent lady principals (here a cat comes out of a bag; "we," then, are *not* a lady principal), that such a custom (teaching 6th grade by primary principals) is by no means universal, but on the contrary, their 6th grade teachers, with commendable pride, refuse to reap the advantage of such assistance," etc.

This is a statement very damaging to lady principals. If true, it shows that they perform less than half the work of men principals. The additional labor of examining classes in grammar grades, and the teaching of the first grade, certainly occupy more than half the time of the man principal. From both of these the principals of primary schools are free.

But we will pay for a year's subscription to THE TEACHER for every first division teacher in the primary schools, who, from the motive assigned by I. N., has "refused to reap the advantage of such assistance" since September last. If there are any teachers so foolish, they need enlightenment; and we know of nothing which would prove so beneficial as THE CHICAGO TEACHER, except what they cannot have, poor things—a man principal.

Since I. N. assures us it will not be a breach of "courtesy," we will now "put face to face" the district school of the lady principal and the schools of men principals. It is true that two men principals lost more of their last High School pupils than this lady lost of her's. But it is also true that *fourteen* men principals, out of nineteen, lost not a single pupil. If you wish to compare the lady's school with that of *one* man, why not take the BROWN School, for instance, which sent 67 pupils, *all* of whom were admitted on an average of 79.8, while the lady sent 35, 30 of whom were admitted, the class averaging 74.2? Or why not take the HOLDEN class, which averaged 81.1? But compare all the men with both the women:

The men sent 413 pupils; lost 24, or 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The women sent 37 pupils; lost 5, or 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The average of all examined was 76.7 per cent; the average of the lady principals' schools were 74.2 and 70.

It is I. N.'s great boast that the lady's school, with an average attendance of 30.8 first grade pupils, had 31 admitted to

the High School, "a trifle in excess of 100 per cent." in the average daily attendance. Compare:

	Av. daily attend.	To High Sch.	Per cent.
Scammon,	8.2	13	158
Kinzie,	19	22	115
Franklin,	6	10	166
Ogden,	9.1	12	131
Holden,	5.2	7	134

The fact that the general per cent. of admission to High School is but 87, is owing to the fact that in certain districts many of the older pupils, including those in first grade, abandon school for business. It is not every man principal who has a first grade that can attend school the whole year; but it is true that men principals frequently fit their first and second grades for the High School in one year.

But I. N. does not place much "reliance" upon "figures." It is not surprising.

"No rogue e'er felt the halter draw,
With good opinion of the law."

But this is not all. A man principal and his head assistant frequently have the care of two grades, sometimes *three*, in the first division, WITH NO EXTRA ASSISTANCE! Is this true of lady principals, or is an additional teacher added with every grade?

The great need in Chicago is an increase of men teachers, for which the schools are suffering. To prove this, we offer the opinion of men whose testimony will not be gainsaid. Superintendent Pickard, in his Report for 1868 (page 186), says: "In my last annual report, I urged upon the Board the appointment of sub-masters in our larger Grammar Schools. The matter was referred to a special committee." The committee "begs leave to report favorably." They argue in its favor, saying, among other things: "As a result of this" (the general work of principals), "all the teaching is done by ladies. Excellent as this is, it cannot be denied that pupils should not leave our Grammar Schools without feeling the influence of a thorough male teacher," etc., etc. This report is signed by Geo. C. Clarke, S. A. Briggs, and J. H. Foster—the two former of whom, having had practical experience in our schools, knew of what they were talking; knew the actual needs of the schools, from having been part of them. And it is a noticeable fact, that those best acquainted with the workings of schools—those who have had the best opportunity of observing their defects, are most emphatic in pronouncing their greatest weakness to be the lack of masculine influence. Members of school boards, who are lawyers, merchants, etc., have repeatedly said in our hearing, "We cannot tell, by visiting a school, how it is prospering." But here we have the testimony of experts. Superintendent Pickard speaks (page 190) of "the necessity for the employment of sub-masters," and argues against "losing the influence of the male mind over the higher classes of our Grammar Schools." He continues: "The question of the comparative value of instruction given by male and female teachers, cannot be brought up here for discussion, nor will it ever arise in my mind, for I have long since decided that no comparison can be instituted. One can teach as well as the other, and no better. Each has peculiarities of mind and of heart that must be impressed upon the pupil, or his education is defective. Each supplements the other, and each is essential to the other. God has set the human race in families, and those families are the best educated in which father and mother share the training and teaching. I do not deprecate the female teacher's work when I ask that the male teacher supplement it, any more than I deprecate man's work

when I say that it is imperfect without woman's aid. My son needs the influence of the female teacher, as my daughter needs that of the male teacher." Mr. Pickard then argues at length the financial aspect of the subject, and adds (p. 194), "I do not believe we can extend our Primary District System, as calculated above, without injury, unless male help be given our principals." That is, masculine supervision over the Primary Schools, as well as masculine teaching in District Schools, is necessary to the complete success of the system.

In the report of 1869, the President of the Board again introduces the subject, and quotes with approbation the remarks of the Superintendent, a part of which we have quoted above. The President also quotes Mr. Pickard's remark, significant when taken in its connection (the same subject, p. 194), "I do not favor decrease of expenditures, if thereby is to come decrease of efficiency."

How pitiful, how inexpressibly puerile, is the pettifogging of a penny-a-liner, whose every line betrays the want of candor and the inevitable warp characteristic of the writer for the partisan press, whose very profession of being a teacher is false, compared with the calm, well-matured thoughts of a man whose life of half a century has been devoted to the cause of education, whose reputation is as wide as the continent, and who has given the subject such careful thought that he says no question as to the truth of his conclusions can ever arise in his mind! And if there was a "necessity" for the employment of more men teachers in Chicago, in 1868, when there were 31 men to an average attendance of less than 18,000 pupils, what shall we say of the present *necessity*, when the Report of 1873 shows 32 men to an average attendance of over 27,000?

I. N. takes great comfort from the fact that several lady principals have lately been appointed by the Board, and seems inclined to claim some credit for it. It is very improbable that a single member of the Board has read one of I. N.'s effusions. The organization of Primary and Grammar Schools with lady principals is simply a matter of dollars and cents. The cause of the appointment of lady principals to *District* schools, we can only guess. That the Superintendent of Chicago Schools, with his opinion that a "pupil's education is defective" without a man's influence, is in favor of the appointment of lady principals to *District* Schools, can be believed only on the supposition that these lady principals are masculine women—an insinuation which even *Blue Beard* resents.

The argument, and, aside from the question of expense, the *only* argument for the employment of women principals is this: "that there are so few avenues of employment open to women," etc., and therefore they should be given every position for which they have the requisite bodily strength. But, it will be observed, that this argument ignores or assumes their capacity for every such position, and when reduced to plainer English, is simply and only this: *that positions in our public schools should be granted to those who are incapable of earning a living elsewhere*. Object to it as you may, that is the sum and substance of the *only argument* which can be brought in favor of lady principals, as such, except the argument of expense.

There has been considerable excitement lately in regard to the *status* and use of the 109th Psalm. By virtue of our character as a theologian, for which we have I. N.'s authority, we desire to offer a novel, but, we believe, a true, explanation of that Psalm. To our theological mind there is no doubt that its curses were designed for the heads of school directors who appoint to, or retain in, the public schools any person, man or woman, simply because he or she cannot earn a living else-

where, or from *any* reason except fitness for the post. Our public schools are *not* designed as eleemosynary institutions—refuges for the unfortunate or incompetent of either sex, any more than they are designed as rewards for political services, or sinecures for personal friends. The "Murder of the Innocents" has consigned the name of Herod to everlasting infamy; but the crime of Herod is not to be compared for a moment to the crime of those who would thus stab, with poisoned dagger, to the very vitals of our public schools. Pension the imbeciles, build for them palaces, supply them, at the public expense, with every luxury of this luxurious age; but don't inflict them, whether they be men or women, upon the children, and upon the community, as *teachers*! Don't set them to teaching because they can't get a living in any other way. It is an insult to the thousands of able women who *can* earn a competence in many other ways; it is an insult to the thousands of well-educated men who have consecrated themselves to the education of youth; it is a *crime* against the *State*.

Without doubt, the best public schools in the world are those of Boston. We will not add to the length of this article by quoting authorities, which lie at our elbow. The causes of this are several; such as the amount of money expended in teachers' salaries, the mere knowledge of which would startle a Chicago Common Council; the general intelligence of Bostonians, which is both cause and result of the excellence of their schools; the interest taken in the schools by all classes; the character of the men composing the School Committee; the small number of pupils to each teacher; and, not least, the *large masculine element in the teaching force*.

The last Boston Report (p. 243), shows:

Regular Teachers.	Males,	129	Females,	834
Special do.	do.	18	do.	2
Sewing do.	—	—	do.	18
Total.....	Males,	147	Females,	854

If *one* Boston man is needed to "supplement" the work of *six* Boston women, while *one* Chicago man supplements the work of *twenty* Chicago women, one of three conclusions must follow. Either: (1) The Chicago men are superior to their Boston brethren; or, (2) The Chicago women are inferior to their Boston sisters; or, (3), which is the *true* conclusion, the Chicago women's work is *not* "supplemented"; that is, as Mr. Pickard expresses it, "the education of the pupil is *defective*." We repeat it, the Chicago schools are *suffering* for more men teachers.

There are some Western cities in which the false economy of the school boards, or the ambition of the superintendents to be surrounded by a corps of admiring women, rather than to incur the risk of being compared with a few thinking men, has deprived the Grammar and Primary Schools wholly, or nearly so, of their men teachers. *Blue Beard* asks no stronger argument than a comparison of the workings of the two systems.

We claim that we have fully established our position, which was *not*, as I. N. asserts, that "women have not brain and power." Neither did we attempt to "silence a woman's pen," though we *did* compel I. N., by her own confession, "to bury" her schoolmaster lover. But she did even that very poorly, for he again walks the earth. Was not his name "*Whiskers?*"

—*Blue Beard.*

VOCAL MUSIC.

STEPS IN THE GRADES.—Continued.

FOURTH GRADE.

FIRST STEP—INTERVALS OF GRADE.

- (a) Write notes on the staff in such a manner that each tone of the grade will be represented several times, *e.g.*



- (b) Teach the pupils to *read, individually*, the notes in all possible ways, that they may be able to name each note *without hesitation*.
 (c) Require the class to *sing in chorus* the same exercise, teaching all the intervals of the grade.
 (d) Do not require the boys to sing higher than A, (second space.) Do not tire the voices of the pupils by singing this exercise too long.
 (e) When the other keys of the grade are introduced, proceed in the same way to teach the intervals of the grade.

SECOND STEP—THEORY AND PRACTICE.

- (a) Teach Sextuple Measure. Dot. Triplet, *Legato* and *Staccato*.
 (b) Dotted Quarter and Eighth notes. Dotted Eighth and Sixteenth notes. Eighth Rest. *Fortissimo* (*f*).
 (c) Pitch names of keys of C, G and D. Writing of scales.
 (d) Illustrate **SECONDS, THIRDS and FOURTHS.** G clef.
 (e) Review the theory of previous grades.

THIRD STEP—THREE-PART SINGING.

- (a) Separate the pupils into three classes. Girls into two, to sing First and Second Soprano. Boys will sing Alto (lower part).
 (b) Paper "chords" similar to those on page 67 *Graded Singer, Book 2*.
 (c) If pupils "flat" in singing, practice the scale often, singing it *mezzo* and *piano*, and review page 67.
 (d) Teach the Alto first (lower part.) The Second Soprano next, and the First Soprano last. Do not allow the girls to sing First Soprano all the time.
 (e) When the pupils can sing the parts separately, try them simultaneously, reviewing each part till they harmonize perfectly, when sung together.
 (f) When the words are first sung, be careful that the Alto and Second Soprano pitches are all right.
 (g) Do not attempt to teach any songs until the "chords" are perfectly learned.

FOURTH STEP—SINGING AT SIGHT.

- (a) Review the first step of the grade (b.) Write on the staff, each day, a simple exercise; and require the pupils to sing it the *first time*.

THIRD GRADE.

FIRST STEP—INTERVAL OF GRADE.

- (a) Represent the tones as in the fourth grade, and pursue the same method in teaching the intervals of the grade.
 (b) Be sure that this work is well done before attempting to teach any songs of the grade.

(c) When the new keys are introduced, teach the intervals before the songs are taught.

SECOND STEP—THEORY AND PRACTICE.

- (a) Review length of Notes and Rests of previous grades.
- (b) Review measure, 2-4, 3-4, 4-4 and 6-8.
- (c) Pitch names of C, G, D, A and E. Writing of scales.
- (d) Illustrate the intervals. SECONDS, THIRDS, FOURTHS and FIFTHS.
- (e) Review theory of previous grades.

THIRD STEP—THREE-PART SINGING.

- (a) Arrange the pupils into three classes, the same as in the fourth grade.
- (b) Teach the chords on page 54, Graded Singer No. 3.
- (c) In this grade, those who have a decided preference for the Second Soprano, or Alto, should be permitted to sing it all the time. Do not allow any pupils in this grade to sing First Soprano all the time.
- (d) If the pupils "flat," proceed as in the fourth grade.
- (e) Do not attempt any songs until the "chords" on page 54 are perfectly sung, teaching the pupils to sing them *mezzo* and *pianissimo*.
- (f) Take special care that the Second Soprano and Alto, sing their tones correctly.

FOURTH STEP—SINGING AT SIGHT.

- (a) Proceed as in fourth grade.
- (b) Review often the *simple* songs and exercises in Graded Singer, Book 3.

—E. E. Whittemore.

READING BOOKS:

THE UNFITNESS OF ALL, AS YET PUBLISHED, FOR THE USE OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

There is at present no series of Reading Books that are what they should be. On the contrary, the best of them fall far short of supplying that place which a series of readers should supply in our common district schools. I have carefully examined series after series, and I fail to find a single one that, after the rudiments of the art have been taught, contain any portion of the fund of general information which the needs of the common district school scholar demand they should contain. Some of them are well adapted to teach the pupil the art of reading, or rather the art of getting knowledge or materials for thought, through a system of hieroglyphics, or representative characters. But none of them follows on and applies this art, by furnishing either any considerable amount of knowledge, or materials for thought, such as can be comprehended and made available by the average district scholar. And it is just here that they fail. The majority of the scholars in our district schools have only a limited time in which they can attend school. They do not go farther than through three or four of the reading books, ciphering, writing and a little geography. And they require reading books that shall contain a fair amount of such information as every farmer's or poor man's son needs, and without which he will neither have the desire to ever get more, nor ever be anything but a dunce.

The ability to read alone is of no value to the scholar, unless he acquire also a love to apply this power in gaining useful knowledge. The scholar is to learn, by means of his eyes, what others have thought. And in order that he may clearly

grasp that thought, it must be level to his ideas; it must be about something of which he has already some knowledge. There is, doubtless, a "desire for knowledge," as a germ, lying in the heart of every child, but this needs careful cultivation. This germ, at first, should be allured into life and activity. But as soon as an interest is well aroused, sugar drops or milk should cease to be the staple of diet. Pleasing should no longer be the principal object. The mind of the child should rather be attracted to the acquirement of substantial truth—that which will be useful and beneficial to him. If to attract and please are the main thing, we are merely educating "dime novel" readers. If simple, the lessons are quickly conned, and the book soon gone through. The scholar gets some knowledge of words, but his taste is spoiled, and he is often worse off than when he began. "One book well read is worth two gone over." There should be solid pabulum enough in each lesson for the scholar to dwell upon some time, so that he may not only obtain an idea of words, but may get thoughts which he will make his own, and which will form part of the future man or woman.

Very few of those who are able to read employ that power to explore the storehouses of knowledge. More use it merely for amusement. But to the greater portion, it is almost a useless acquirement. It is generally recognized that this country offers greater inducements for universal education than any other. But, from careful examination, I find the elementary books far inferior to some in the German language. They are not as carefully prepared, nor as calculated to meet the wants of primary schools.

Competition, in this country, strives rather to undersell than to furnish reading books which shall be better. After examining several series of reading books, the one which I considered the best of them all recommended itself in the following manner: "This series is designed to meet a general demand for smaller and *cheaper* books."

"They contain, of course, none but entirely 'new selections.' These are arranged according to a strictly progressive and novel method of developing the elementary sounds in order in the lower numbers, and in all, with a view to topics and general literary style. The mind is thus led in fixed channels to proficiency in every branch of good reading, and the evil results of scattering, as practised by most school-book authors, avoided."

"Elocution is taught by prefatory treatises of constantly advancing grade and completeness in each volume, which are illustrated by wood-cuts in the lower books, and by black-board diagrams in the higher."

"The type is semi-phonetic. Every letter having more than one sound is clearly distinguished in all its variations without in any way militating or disguising the normal form of the letter."

"The most casual observer is at once impressed with the unparalleled mechanical beauty of these Readers. Not less than \$25,000 was expended in their preparation before publishing, with a result which entitles them to be considered, "The Perfection of Common School Books."

Thus Cheapness, Semi-phonetic type, Improved Methods of teaching Elocution, Unparalleled Mechanical Beauty, and New, Choice Selections, are the qualities which these books have to recommend themselves. These are the grand features which, in the eyes of the publishers, make them "The Perfection of Common School Books."

We do not wish to make rhetoricians and elocutionists of the urchins who fill our country schools. Nor can we hope to make them students of literature. Improved methods of teaching elocution, extended rules for orthoepy, or systems for letter-marking, are wholly out of place in the common school read-

ing book. The correct orthoepy of the English language can only be acquired with each new word which the pupil learns. And where the scholar is interested and fully appreciates the idea, there will be no trouble with the elocution. Give him matter, and leave the manner to the teacher.

Not one scholar in ten is able to comprehend the Beauties of Eminent Authors, or "Choice Selections," or to be benefitted by them. Far more effectual to interest or instruct, to cultivate and refine, would be the "Christmas Carol," or "David Copperfield"—the latter of which would be found much better adapted to common schools, and a careful perusal of which would be found more serviceable. (For it would at least lead him to enjoy a better class of light reading.) And the idea of giving selections of various sorts of composition, no matter how judiciously made, to improve style, is simply ridiculous.

No book of "Choice Selections" is fit for a school-room. They are only suitable, if gilt-edged, to lay on the parlor table. They may be serviceable to the student of literature, or the man of education. But to suppose that the bare-footed urchin, as he stumbles and whines over the words, is going to get much benefit from them, is simple foolishness. The teacher, in many cases, does not understand the allusions or incidents. And the dreamy, vacant look of the scholar, as the teacher endeavors to explain, his fruitless attempt to spell those words, and, after the lesson is over, the alacrity with which he puts up that book, have, during many years of experience, fully demonstrated to me that it does not do him much good.

We urgently need a totally different set of books. Books carefully wrought out and prepared by some competent man—not books made up with the scissors and paste-pot. It requires the best talent of the country to prepare such books. And they should be designed for the pupils in our country schools. That the proper combination of attractiveness and useful knowledge can be made, there is no doubt. Indeed, I found a few pieces in the book that were just right. Let those men write a whole book. Let them give the fundamental truths of science, the most essential facts and laws in a clear and simple manner. Let us have some Natural History, Physical Geography, Physics, Physiology, etc. Let the aim be to give as much real knowledge as possible to the poor district scholar. Let them teach that the sole object of reading is to get information, and then give that information which is most essential to every one.

I am convinced that a large number of teachers fully realize the importance of having such a series, and that the appearance of any such series would meet with great favor. And I myself should be glad to see such books, and should consider them the greatest blessing to the cause of education.

—H. F. White.

Manitowoc, Wis.

THE ORAL COURSE.

The subject of Oral Instruction in the public schools of Chicago has been a topic of earnest discussion at two successive meetings of the Principals' Association. Those discussions can scarcely be said to have exhausted the subject. It seems to me that upon points which were most warmly contested there was some misunderstanding between the disputants as to each other's meaning and theories. While pleading not guilty to the apparent egotism, this article is written in the hope of reconciling some of the more emphatic statements on either side, and of facilitating a better understanding of the subject.

The discussion was not so much a comparison of the relative merits of text-book instruction and oral instruction, each considered separately, as it was a comparison of a judicious combination of text-book and oral instruction with a system of instruction wholly oral, or, with the lecture system. When the opponents of the latter had very thoroughly abused that system, consternation seized their ranks upon being reminded that the very best part of the instruction given in connection with text-books, was given orally. It seems to me that the employment of this argument was scarcely fair, although the wording of the resolution discussed warranted it. The oral instruction which that argument defended needed no defense. It was not the oral instruction which had been attacked. It was not the oral instruction that had aroused the opposition of so many principals. The issue was, and is, between a system of oral instruction outside, and independent of, text-books, and a system of which the "text-book is the index"—a system which explains and "elucidates the text-book."

It may be said, and I think it is true, that with this understanding of the question there is not a great difference of opinion between the principals, after all. There are very few defenders of a purely "lecture" system of instruction. At any rate, there are very few who would attempt to carry that system to any great extent, especially if they were to do the lecturing. Such a system is very little better than a system which contemplates the communication of knowledge wholly by text-books. The truth is, that text-books contain a good deal of knowledge; and he who seeks to train "the perceptive faculties" of school boys, without directing their exercise in that fertile field during the greater part of their school hours, has an amount of innocence and faith very rare in "these degenerate days." The exercise of the perpectives is a means; the acquisition of knowledge is an end; all exercise of the perpectives in school which have not that end in view, is unprofitable. Careful consideration of these things will convince us that there are two extremes in this matter, which should be avoided as nearly equally faulty. The one would make the text-book the child's only means of acquiring knowledge, and would give as a result, pupils who can repeat glibly whole pages of their text-book in geography, for instance, but if asked the question, must conscientiously answer that they "never saw the earth." The other would have the pupils arranged like a row of empty barrels, which it was the teacher's business to fill at stated intervals.

There is no doubt that a large number of the principals and teachers feel that this latter extreme is the one we have reached in Chicago, so far as the *Oral Course* is concerned. Whether the facts justify this feeling is a question which the discussion seemed to answer in the affirmative. Whether the remedies suggested are reliable, may well be doubted. These remedies may be divided into two classes. By the first, we are to reject the oral course, so called, and follow our text-books. We do not understand that those who take this view of the matter would abandon oral instruction, by any means. They would confine it, however, to topics of the text-book, and leave it to the judgment of the teacher. The other remedy contemplates a relaxation of the severity of examinations for promotion in this topic, a substitution of oral for written examinations, and an effort to make proficiency less important than it has been heretofore.

The idea of the oral course in the first place, was to assist the teacher in the matter of giving oral instruction. No teacher can avoid giving such instruction. The instruction given will be in proportion to the intelligence (including experience), tact, and, possibly, the loquacity, of the teacher. It was to direct these, that the oral course was instituted. In so far as it attains this object, no fault can properly be found with it. It is better that the teacher's unavoidable and inevitable talk should have some object, than that it should proceed at irregular, unsystematic, and aimless random. It is better to teach a child the use of a cat's whiskers, than to engage his meditations upon the sibylline utterances of the venerable "Mother Goose," or the touching heroism of the "Giant Killer." This idea of the oral course is such as to command it to the common sense and kindly thoughts of every intelligent educator. Why, then, has it fallen into apparent disrepute? Why is that system, whose inauguration was hailed

with pleasure by a class of progressive and earnest teachers, now regarded with dislike by a class of teachers not less progressive and earnest? The answer is to be found in the fact that the oral course has become, to a great extent, something separate from, and independent of, our text-book work—something that has no necessary, and very little actual, connection with it.

The true explanation of the whole matter is, that teachers are required to communicate too much technical information upon topics whose theory, application, and principles find no place in the text-book. When "we ask a teacher to communicate a certain definite or indefinite amount of exact oral technical information upon a variety of difficult topics, we impose upon her weak though willing shoulders a herculean and unnecessary task." It is not that unnecessary or useless knowledge is communicated, but that the means of communication are not the best. No one, who will carefully, patiently, and intelligently examine the graded course in reference to the "Oral" of the various grades, will say that any considerable portion of it is incomprehensible, barbarous, vicious, or unattainable for children of those grades. What is needed, is to give pupils and teachers better means of accomplishing this work, which is acknowledged to be within their capacity, and to be useful and valuable to them.

In the proposed plan of relaxing the severity of examinations, and abolishing all written work, both in study and in examination on these topics, calculated to promote this result? Is it not rather calculated to make our work in this department superficial? Will it not increase the teacher's labor, and at the same time lessen her inspiration by diminishing the pupil's knowledge and the necessity for it? If we have been too exacting heretofore, it may be desirable to lessen the amount of work to be done, but in the name of true culture and good faith let not its thoroughness be impaired. The advantage of substituting oral for written examinations is questionable. Any examiner whose intelligence is so limited and whose soul is so infinitesimal that he cannot prepare fair questions, and mark the answers justly and reasonably in a written examination, will fail more signally in an oral examination.

It does not appear to me that there is too much to be done in the oral of the course. Herein I perhaps differ from a majority of the teachers; certainly from nearly all who participated in the discussions at the principals' meetings. No one will say that anything in the "Miscellaneous" provision of the "Tenth Grade Outline" is either improper, unnecessary, or unreasonable. The "more observable properties of common objects," "the visible parts of the human body," and the "five senses," are such subjects as would naturally engage the attention of tenth grade children, and the Outline is simply a kindly guide, that indicates what would necessarily be done in that grade any way.* Substantially the same thing may be said of the Ninth Grade Outline. The "colors of the spectrum," and what is suggested of the "three kingdoms of nature," are not beyond the capacity, and certainly not beyond the necessity, of these children. It is possible that the study of the chromos in the eighth grade is susceptible of being made to comprehend too many details, and that the same is true of the same work in the seventh and sixth grades. But this is a matter that is very largely within the discretion and control of individual principals. If the characteristic of the "families" of animals studied in these grades be appreciated by the pupils, and the illustrations afforded by their own experience in the matter be intelligently applied, the spirit of the requirements of the course will have been complied with. If disastrous results follow from attempting more, the principal should censure his own judgment, rather than the graded course therefore. The other requirements of the Oral of these grades are simple, natural, and salutary.

I do not find anything in the Oral of the grammar grades difficult, either of comprehension or acquisition, for the pupils of those grades. There is nothing there prescribed to be taught which I would not wish my own child to know upon graduating from the district school. With all its provisions, modifications, and additions, the oral course of the public schools of Chicago commends itself to my judgment, as being wise in its conception, practical in its aim, and capable of being made beneficent in its results.

But are the complaints which are urged ill-founded? I think not. The means and appliances by which we attempt to accomplish the work of the oral course are inadequate. The

apparent differences of opinion in the recent discussions, arose very largely from confounding these inadequate means with the object aimed at in the course. If a farmer, with a dull scythe, does a small day's work in a disgraceful manner and with infinite labor, must he, therefore, cease to harvest the crop of his meadow? Should he not rather go and sharpen his old scythe, or get a "McCormick Mower," and properly perform his proper work in the proper season? The homely simile is not an unfitting representation of the present condition of the oral work in our schools. The complaint is, that in this matter, the teachers, with infinite toil, reap only a small recompense in the way of knowledge gained for their pupils. What is the remedy?

The remedy—an ample remedy—is to be found in a suggestion which seemed to be accepted by both parties in the late discussion. "Make the text-book the index of what is to be taught." The trouble is that our text-books are not adapted to the oral course. They furnish no indication of what is to be taught. This is notably the case with the readers. The series of readers used in Chicago, ought to have some lessons in each grade prepared with direct reference to the oral of that grade. Our present books are not destitute of topics that need oral elucidation. But there is no connection, systematic or otherwise, between these topics and the topics of the oral course. Hence instruction in the latter *must* be given independent of the text-book, if given at all. All the technical definitions and principles which the graded course contemplates, and which a faithful compliance with its suggestions requires, should be enunciated, and explained, and illustrated in some book in the hands of the pupil. The book will then be an "index of what is to be taught," and the teacher can "elucidate the text" easily and profitably, and the "perceptive faculties" need not suffer for want of abundant exercise. I do not think the reading will thereby be overlooked. These lessons can be prepared so as to secure at least as valuable a drill in "expression" as most of the matter that now fills these books. The examination in oral can then justly be made more exact and satisfactory than now. The best interests of the public schools of Chicago demand that there should be prepared at the earliest possible moment, and inserted in the readers for the different grades, a series of explanatory and illustrative exercises upon the "Language" and "Oral" of these grades.

—James Hannan.

NOTES.

PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION.

The May Meeting of the Principals' Association was held at Normal Hall, Saturday morning, May 9th, 1874. After the usual routine exercises, the Superintendent communicated the thanks of Mr. Doty to Principals for courtesies received by the delegation of Detroit teachers upon the occasion of their recent visit. Attention was then called to the proposed Agassiz Memorial, and the circulars connected therewith and the contribution to be taken up in this city May 28th next. No contributions were to be solicited, as whatever was given should be an entirely free-will offering.

The Superintendent announced his intention to conduct an examination in Reading in every room in the city, except 10th Grade rooms, during the present term. He further announced the probability that the time employed in the examination of candidates for admission to the High School would be extended to two days. In answer to a question, it was stated that Drawing in the 1st Grade should receive only its due proportion of time, and that pupils would be marked upon the work done. Other branches should not be slighted in order that certain books should be finished. The question was asked, as to whether 1st Grade pupils should review the "Oral" of previous grades the present term. The Superintendent deemed it a sufficient, and, in fact, the only proper answer to the question, to say that candidates for promotion from any grade should be ready for examination in any topic in the previous grades.

The question for discussion was: "Resolved, that in the opinion of this Association, much of the so-called oral instruction is at the expense of more important studies." After remarks by Messrs. Belfield, G. D. Broome, Delano, Mahony, Stowell, Baker, Kirk, Merriman, and the Superintendent, the resolution was adopted.

PROGRAMME OF SOCIETY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Illinois Society of School Principals, at Galesburg, July 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1874, in the High School Building.

Tuesday—8:00 P. M.—Address of Welcome, Hon. C. L. Leach, Jr. President's Address, M. Andrews, Macomb. Business.

Wednesday—9:00 A. M.—What Problems connected with Education ought this Association to discuss? J. Mahony, Winetka. Discussion of the above by J. A. Mercer, Sheffield, J. F. Everett, Rock Island. 10:00 A. M.—Examinations, F. Hanford, Chicago. Discussion, J. R. McGregor, Mendota, Geo. Blount, Forreston. General Business. 2:00 P. M.—Truancy, Leslie Lewis, Hyde Park. Discussion, J. V. Thomas, Dixon, J. H. Rushton, Plano. 3:30 P. M.—The Principles which should Govern us in our Relations to Each Other and to School Boards, Aaron Gove, Normal. Discussion, H. H. C. Miller, Morris, W. F. Bromfield, Tuscola. Evening Lecture—"The Relations of the Pulpit to Popular Education," Rev. M. J. Savage, Chicago.

Thursday—9:00 A. M.—To what extent, and with what success, can Training Classes be connected with our Graded Schools? W. B. Powell, Aurora. Discussion, L. B. Hastings, Litchfield, Harry Moore, Sycamore. 10:30 A. M.—Female Teachers in Public Schools, Esther M. Sprague, Chicago, C. P. Snow, Princeton, Mary Pennell, Polo, Chas. I. Parker, Joliet. 2:00 P. M.—The importance of Reference Libraries, and How to Secure them, J. M. Piper, Mt. Morris, T. C. Swafford, Oneida. Discussion, C. P. Hall, Princeton, O. M. Tucker, Lacon. Business.

The following railroads will return members for one-fifth fare, on the presentation of certificate signed by railroad secretary: Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; Chicago & Northwestern; Illinois Central; Indianapolis, Bloomington & Western. The Chicago & Iowa will issue excursion tickets to teachers who call for them before entering the cars on their way to the meeting. Any further railroad arrangements that may be made will be announced at Galesburg.

Teachers and Superintendents attending the meetings of the Society will be entertained at the Union House and Brown's Hotel, at the rate of \$2.00 per day.

Headquarters of Executive Committee at Union House, near the High School Building.

It is expected that Superintendent Sheldon, of New York City, and other distinguished educators will be present, but as their promises were not positive, we have not placed their names on the programme.

P. R. WALKER, Rochelle,
M. L. SEYMOUR, Blue Island,
S. M. BATHURST, Leland, } *Executive Com.*

THE TEACHER'S DESK.

COLTON'S GEOGRAPHIES. COLTON'S NEW INTRODUCTORY GEOGRAPHY. COLTON'S COMMON SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY.—New York: Sheldon & Company. Western Agency, S. & Co., 113 and 115 State Street, Chicago.

The Introductory Geography is a handsome little book and quite available in the hands of young pupils; but as we are at present interested in a one-book course, our attention is especially called to the "Common School." This is of peculiar character. It is at once easy and comprehensive. It is in reality two books in one—one for study, one for reference. In its department of study the course is simple and progressive; in its department of reference, the mouser after facts can comfort his soul with the minutest details. We find in its matter no *vain repetitions*; thorough *condensation* without the omission of essentials; and excellent *arrangement*.

The United States is treated as follows: Map, double-page, of the U. S. with questions thereon, printed on two adjacent sides; Map of New England States; Questions on the same and classified review on opposite page; brief description of U. S.; briefer of New England; a word on each State; an orderly review of the cities; and the principal institutions of learning.

The same order is adhered to throughout the book; first, a Map of a Section, with questions on opposite page, followed by descriptive text for the same. The Maps are well executed, and not crowded; the descriptions are pithy and terse; paper, press-work, topography, and binding, beyond reproach.

It is difficult to compose a geography without being in a quandary as to the amount of detailed information that should be given in the work, especially upon the maps. As a result, a book is made, either so crowded with facts of minor importance as to confuse and discourage the child, or else to contain hardly enough matter to pay for the paper on which it is printed. This work has a reference department, consisting of a physical map of the U. S., routes of travel, railroad maps, a series of reference maps of the U. S., and a thorough system of map drawing; also a pronouncing vocabulary, and usual statistical tables as full as any one could desire. We wish and predict for the book a wide circulation.

MANUAL OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. Designed for the instruction of American youth in the duties, obligations, and rights of citizenship. By Israel Ward Andrews, D. D., President of Marietta College. Wilson, Hinkle & Co., Cincinnati and New York.

This is a well-bound volume of 370 pages of text, and an appendix containing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The contents are as follows: I. Civil Governments; II. The Colonial Governments; III. The Articles of Confederation; IV. The Constitution of the United States; V. The Ratification of the same; VI. Admission of New States—Territorial Governments; VII. Practical operation of the Constitution; VIII. The State Governments.

The chapter on Civil Government presents a different view of the fount of authority in civil society from that usually found in school text books. The theory of a "social compact" is repudiated, and the doctrine that sovereignty vests in the *community* as a whole, and not in the *individuals*, is advanced. Civil society is claimed to be the "natural state of man"; and civil authority, lodged in the people, is said to be of divine origin. The old fiction of individuals surrendering a portion of their rights in organized society, is shown to be a fiction—nothing more. It is proved also that our Government is not a confederacy of states; but that we are one nation; the Constitution being the supreme law of the land. "The American Constitution has no prototype in any prior constitution. It is original—a new contribution to political science." "Our Government is not a simple, consolidated republic, on the one hand, nor, on the other, is it a league of states."

"The Constitution of the United States is a part of the constitution of each State." The chapter on Colonial Governments is a historical sketch, coming down to the adoption of the Articles of Confederation. Then the Constitution, after an account of its adoption being given, is examined by the clear-minded commentator, and its principles expounded in the most satisfactory manner. The remainder of the work is chiefly historical.

As a text-book for academic students, and as a work of general information and reference, we hold the "Manual" to be superior to any treatise of its kind. It deals with the facts of the origin and nature of government, not with their fictions. Much information, historical and statistical, is introduced with the discussion of the several sections and clauses of the Constitution.

PUBLISHERS' DEPARTMENT.

A very rapid, safe and easy way to make money, is to procure territory to introduce the latest useful invention that is wanted every day, by every one, every where, who has a family, a full sized Sewing Machine with Table and Treadle for only \$10 that does the same work as a Machine you would pay \$80 for, rapid, smooth and firm, makes a seam so strong the cloth will tear before the stitches rip apart. Eight new attachments for all work and the improved Button Hole Worker used by us only. Agents only need show them in operation and sell in every house they enter. \$30 and upwards cleared daily by smart agents. No such Machine was ever offered at any such price. 35,000 sold last year, 100,000 Families use them. Demand increasing every day where they become known. Ministers, Judges, Lawyers, Editors, Machinists, Tailors &c., recommend them as perfect. Rights given free to first applicants. If there is no agency in your place, write for it, or buy a Machine for your Family or a relation, there is none better or so cheap. Machines sent to all parts of the country on receipt of price \$10. Read advertisement beginning "\$60 saved in every Family" in another part of this paper. Address the Proprietors, ROBERT J. MULLIGAN & CO.,